

FOR IMMEDIATE
RELEASE

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**CAL PERFORMANCES PRESENTS THE NATIONAL THEATRE OF GREECE IN THE
AMERICAN PREMIERE OF A NEW PRODUCTION OF EURIPIDES' MEDEA
SEPTEMBER 20 & 21 AT THE HEARST GREEK THEATRE**

PERFORMANCES HONOR THE 100TH ANNIVERSARY OF UC BERKELEY'S HEARST GREEK THEATRE

Planned humanities programs include *Sightlines* pre-performance talks, Greek theater symposium and historical exhibit

BERKELEY, August 19, 2003 – Cal Performances welcomes the **National Theatre of Greece** in a contemporary production of Euripides' *Medea*, performed in modern Greek with English supertitles, **Saturday, September 20 at 8:00 p.m. & Sunday, September 21 at 7:00 p.m.** The American premiere performances take place in UC Berkeley's historic, open-air **Hearst Greek Theatre**, which celebrates its 100th anniversary this year. Architecturally inspired by the ancient Greek amphitheaters of Epidaurus, Dionysus and Pompeii the 8,000-seat Hearst Greek Theatre affords Cal Performances' audiences the opportunity to experience Greek drama in the setting in which it was intended.

The National Theatre of Greece's production of *Medea* will be performed downstage center, below the raised platform of the stage, in the semi-circular orchestra which would have traditionally been the scene of action in a Greek play of the period. Renowned actress **Tamilla Koulieva** leads the 30-member cast in the title role. Live music for trombone, trumpet, and piano accompanies the production from the stage. The tale of spousal rage spawning an act of infanticide is the narrative framework for director **Stathis Livanthinos'** extraordinary production. Free *Sightlines* pre-performance discussions with UC Berkeley Department of Classics professor Mark Griffith will take place September 20, from 7:00 p.m. – 7:30 p.m. and September 21, from 6:00 p.m. – 6:30 p.m. in the Hearst Greek Theatre.

Additionally, in celebration of the National Theatre of Greece's performances and the 100th anniversary of the Hearst Greek Theatre, Cal Performances presents, in association with UC Berkeley departments, the **Hearst Greek Theatre Centennial Celebration Exhibition**, a pictorial

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display of the history of the Hearst Greek Theatre. The exhibition includes details of theatrical antecedents in the ancient world; a history of the outdoor theater movement in the United States; and the architecture and building of the Hearst Greek Theatre and its various uses over the past century. The exhibit will be on display beginning **September 4, 2003** in the lobby of Zellerbach Hall, then travels to Morrison Library (located within UC Berkeley's Doe Main Library), for the **September 19** Greek theater symposium, and then to the Hearst Greek Theatre **September 20 & 21** for the run of the National Theatre of Greece's *Medea*. Afterwards the exhibit will reside again in Doe Main Library for the remainder of the year. **Mark Griffith**, Professor of Classics and Acting Chair of Department of Performance Studies, will moderate a symposium on Euripides' *Medea* with scholars and members of the National Theatre of Greece on **Friday, September 19**, from **3:30 p.m.–5:00 p.m.** in the Morrison Library.

MEDEA

Euripides' drama reveals the tragedy of Medea, a sorceress who used her powers to help her husband, Jason, leader of the Argonauts, capture the Golden Fleece. Jason later deserts her, in favor of gaining the kingdom of Corinth—where they are living in exile—through marriage to King Creon's daughter. Medea plots revenge against her unfaithful husband and the grotesque events that follow give structure to one of the most legendary of Greek tragedies—a timeless narrative exploring revenge, power struggles between the sexes, and the pain ignited by infidelity. For this modern production, directed by **Stathis Livanthinos**, Euripides' ancient Greek text has been translated into modern Greek by **Stratis Pascalis**. *Medea* will be performed in Greek with English supertitles. Sets and contemporary costumes are designed by **Eleni Manolopoulou**, with lighting created by **Alekos Anastasiou**. Music for trombone, trumpet and piano, composed by **Theodoros Ambazis**, will be performed live on stage by **Spyrogiannis Alexandratos**, **Tasos Drampalis**, and **Spyros Manesis**. In addition to **Koulieva** (Medea), the cast features **Ioannis Mavritsakis** (Jason), **Maria Savvidou** (nurse), **Giorgos Dampasis** (tutor), **Dimitris Imellos** (Creon), **Vassilis Androu** (Aegeus), **Aris Troupakis** (Messenger), and 24 chorus members.

ARTISTS

Actress **Tamilla Koulieva** (Medea) was born in Moscow. She studied theater direction at the Cultural Institute of Moscow, later earning a masters of Fine Arts in stage and cinema acting from the State Institute of Cinema of Moscow. Following the receipt of her MFA she remained to

teach educational development and improvisation at the Institute. Koulieva also has a diploma in piano from the State Musical School of Moscow. In 1992, the actress moved to Greece where she has lived and worked ever since. Highlights of her film career include *The Trap; Vassiliki*, (which won the Greek 1st National Award for Best Movie of the Year in 1998); and *Tomorrow We'll Know*, for which Koulieva won Best Actress at the International Film Festival of Alexandria. Her stage performances in Greece include *Coriolanus*, *The Trojan Women*, and *The Woods*. Since 1992 she has been teaching acting and improvisation in various drama schools, including the Actors' and Directors' Workshop of the National Theatre of Greece.

Director **Stathis Livanthinos** was born in Athens, Greece. He is a graduate of the School of Drama of Pelos Katselis, and of the Department of English Literature of the University of Athens. He worked as an actor for the Greek Popular Theatre of Manos Katrakis from 1981-1983, and studied theater direction at the Moscow State Institute of the Theater from 1984-1990. Livanthinos was awarded the Moscow Critics Award for his production of Tom Stoppard's *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are Dead* at the Mayakofski Theater in 1990. He has directed a vast body of work, including *Dying as a Country*, *Little Tragedies*, *Kazanova*, *Eleanora Douze*, and *Glengarry Glen Ross*. He has taught directing workshops organized by the Department of Theater Studies of the University of Patras, and taught directing and acting classes for American Repertory Theatre in Boston. Since 2001 he has been the director of the Experimental Stage of the National Theatre of Greece.

NATIONAL THEATRE OF GREECE

Since its founding in 1900 by King George I, the **National Theatre of Greece** has considered the revival of ancient Greek drama to be its prime objective. The company began performing in the indoor theater of Agiou Konstantinou Street in Athens, and later began to stage productions outdoors on a regular basis at the Ancient Theater of Epidaurus and at Herodion. The Epidaurus Annual Festival of Ancient Drama has become an international phenomenon, attracting thousands of Greek national and foreign visitors each year. The current artistic director, **Nikos Kourkoulos**, is one of the leading actors of Greek theater. Under his direction, the company operates five stages—three at the historic theater site and two at its new theater. The mission of the National Theatre of Greece is the fundamental belief that ancient tragedy and comedy deal with vital intellectual questions that are still applicable to the problems of the present and the future.

HEARST GREEK THEATRE

Presentation of the National Theatre of Greece at the **Hearst Greek Theatre** celebrates the 100th anniversary of this unique facility on the UC Berkeley campus. The site, in a hollow of eucalyptus trees on the hills east of campus, was a natural meeting place for students, and in 1894 Ben Weed discovered its adaptability for theatrical productions. The idea of the Greek Theatre originated with UC Berkeley President Benjamin Ide Wheeler, himself a Greek philologist. Newspaper baron William Randolph Hearst took on all expenses of construction at the encouragement of his mother, Phoebe, who was a principal contributor to the University in her own right. University architect John Galen Howard drew the plans. Construction of the amphitheater began in 1902 and was used, though it wasn't quite finished, for the first time on May 14, 1903 when President Roosevelt delivered the commencement address for that year's graduating class. The *San Francisco Chronicle* wrote of Roosevelt's speech: "In a great walled amphitheater such as has scarcely existed in the world since the memory days of Greece, one whose only roof was a perfect sky, azureous as that above Athens, President Roosevelt delivered the most striking and interesting address of his series of speeches in California."

In September 1903 the Hearst Greek Theatre was formally dedicated, and featured the presentation of Aristophanes' *The Birds*, in the original Greek, by UC Berkeley students. The origins of Cal Performances date from 1906, when Sarah Bernhardt drew international attention to the Hearst Greek Theatre in performances of Racine's *Phaedre*, done as a benefit for earthquake and fire victims of that year. The early part of the 20th century also saw copious student productions of Greek and Shakespearean classics at the amphitheater; and the campus tradition of Sunday afternoon concerts began there. The Committee on Music and Drama (Cal Performances' predecessor) was responsible for the selection and presentation of professional companies at the Hearst Greek Theatre. Dance, music and theater luminaries who followed in subsequent years include Maud Adams, Margaret Anglin, Ruth St. Denis and Ted Shawn, in addition to striking political figures of the century like Corazon Aquino, the Dalai Lama and Janet Reno. Since the early 1970s, "The Greek" as it is popularly known, has enjoyed widespread acclaim as one of the foremost rock music venues in the Bay Area, boasting performances by everyone from the Grateful Dead to the Eurythmics, and R.E.M. to Santana.

TICKET INFORMATION

Tickets for the National Theatre of Greece's production of Euripides' *Medea* **September 20 & 21** at the **Hearst Greek Theatre** are priced at **\$32.00** (GA) and **\$62.00** (Reserved). Performance tickets are available through the Cal Performances Ticket Office at Zellerbach Hall; at (510) 642-9988 to charge by phone; at www.calperfs.berkeley.edu; and by cash only at the door. Half-price tickets are available for purchase by UC Berkeley students. UC faculty and staff, senior citizens and other students receive a \$2 discount, and UC Alumni Association members receive a \$3 discount (Special Events excluded). For more information, call Cal Performances at (510) 642-9988, or visit the Cal Performances web site at www.calperfs.berkeley.edu.

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Cal Performances' presentation of the National Theatre of Greece has been made possible with the generous support of Alex G. Spanos and a grant from The Consortium for the Arts at UC Berkeley.

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CALENDAR EDITORS PLEASE NOTE:

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

THE NATIONAL THEATRE OF GREECE, SEPTEMBER 20 & 21, 2003

Thursday, September 4-December 31, 2003
EXHIBITION

Locations Vary
UC Berkeley Campus

“Hearst Greek Theatre Centennial Celebration Exhibition,” a splendid display tracing the history of the Hearst Greek Theatre at UC Berkeley, theatrical venue antecedents from the ancient world; a history of the outdoor theater movement in the United States; the architecture and building of the Greek Theatre; and its various campus and community uses over the past century.

Dates and locations for the exhibition are as follows: Zellerbach Hall lobby, September 4-18; Morrison Library, September 19; Hearst Greek Theatre, September 20 & 21; Doe Main Library September 22 – December 31.

The exhibition is curated by Mark Griffith, Professor of Classics, and Linda Jewell, Professor of Landscape Design. Images are provided courtesy of the Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley and the College of Environmental Design Archives. The Exhibition's panels are designed by Mary Scott, UC Berkeley Library Graphics Department.

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Friday, September 19, 3:30 p.m.-5:00 p.m.
SYMPOSIUM

Morrison Library in the Doe Main Library
UC Berkeley Campus

Mark Griffith, Professor of Classics and Acting Chair of Department of Performance Studies, moderates a symposium Euripides' *Medea*, with scholars and members of the National Theatre of Greece. Admission is free, subject to space availability. A reception will follow.

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Saturday, September 20, 7:00 – 7:30 p.m.
Sunday, September 21, 6:00 – 6:30 p.m.
SIGHTLINES

Hearst Greek Theatre
Gayley Road at Stadium Rim Way, Berkeley

Pre-performance talks with UC Berkeley Department of Classics professor **Mark Griffith**. *Sightlines* is a continuing program of pre- and post-performance discussions with Cal Performances' guest artists and scholars, designed to enrich the audience's experience. These events are free to ticketholders.

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Saturday, September 20 at 8:00 p.m.
Sunday, September 21 at 7:00 p.m.

Hearst Greek Theatre
Gayley Road at Stadium Rim Way, Berkeley

Theater

National Theatre of Greece
Medea

Program:

Cal Performances celebrates the 100th anniversary of the Hearst Greek Theatre with the National Theatre of Greece's new staging of Euripides' *Medea*, directed by Stathis Livanthinos and featuring renowned actress Tamilla Koulieva in the title role. This modern production, performed in Greek with English supertitles, tells the ancient tale of the sorceress Medea's plot to exact revenge on her unfaithful husband.

Tickets: \$32.00 (GA) and \$62.00 (Reserved), available through the Cal Performances Ticket Office at Zellerbach Hall; at (510) 642-9988 to charge by phone; at www.calperfs.berkeley.edu; and by cash only at the door.